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# ANIMAL ETHIC AND THE ETHICAL MIRROR

A n t o n M l i n a r

## Introduction

Animal ethic is not from yesterday. Certain statements on animals from the viewpoint of human awareness of animals are going back to the Romantic thinkers who called for a deeper connection with the nature (Mary Shelley, Friedrich Goethe, William Wordsworth, and others). While they were advocating its usefulness for reasons of health, they also longed for freedom of the individual through the nostalgia of the perfect past. One of the most influencing thinkers was John Locke (1632–1704) with his notions on democracy and liberal education. And, not last, the revival of enthusiasm for European cultural traditions which also triggered interests for anthropological studies seems to be the powerful source of conscious awareness in the sixties of 20<sup>th</sup> century for life's and environmental questions. *The golden bough*, written by James Frazer (1854–1941), witnesses for this cultural shift which liberated itself from the core-tradition of Western (Mediterranean) philosophical flow. It opened an autonomous access to the ethic of life-world.

I choose the term *animal ethic* in singular. The only reason for this is that I would like to frame the space of ethical thinking as an explication of human's position in this frame. "If we study an argument and end up with a strongly skeptical conclusion in terms of its requirements, this indicates that our attention is turned toward the stringent requirements for 'knowledge' that are implicitly assumed in arriving safely at the conclusion" (Naess, 2008: 151). Naess is playing with Descartes' philosophical presumption that neither human knowing nor their ignorance (doubt) is relevant for life-world. This extremely anthropocentric and egocentric frame of reference which allowed Descartes to doubt of everything (*de omnibus dubitandum est*) excluded the implicit frame, because the philosopher stood consciously out of it. Instead of discussing

known reasons for animal ethic written for humans – usually it entails questions regarding animal rights and/or animal suffering –, I would stress here intimate relation between explicit and implicit (embodied) knowledge. So my intention is not to build a system but to enter the frame and to become part of the viewpoint.

In answering the question how humanity treats the rest of the animal world, we should not be surprised how certain decisions under pressure of scientific, social and economic advance have influenced the present-day discussions on animal ethic, an vice versa. This dangerous statement that we might act without corresponding knowledge, well known also in human ethics when there are in question human genetics or euthanasia, and other issues, is another reason for choosing the metaphor of ethical mirroring. Animal ethic is an ethic of valuing human life and death.

Speaking of ethical mirroring resembles the dilemma of how to understand processes which with transforming also transform themselves (Minsky, 1986). It is easy to understand how mechanical work-process transforms raw materials into products. But what is the body doing when it processes materials? What processes the brains when they process? What are life-processes when they, in processing, change themselves? What is the meaning of life-world that we experience it as pain or that we care for others? We can probably say that it is not possible to separate process from the processed, the message from the messenger, the reality from its immediateness. It is naturally not the point that we are looking for at the marketplace at any price. But sometimes are even cheap answers the sign that it might be better to be a searcher, or be silent, that finder of 'necessary' meaning.

The intention here is to show that the principal activity of ethics is ethical thinking, not success rates or manipulation without harm. It is not the mere behavior or the manufacturing right things. Within the process, it changes the way of subsequently memorized content. Today, this mode of questioning is facilitated by using new thinking methods which released a variety of scientific interests especially in the spheres of cognition and of present-time consciousness. Nevertheless, animal ethic is not an easy undertaking. Like in human ethics, since there exist laws and rules which are better suited for 'citizens' and sometimes discrimi-

nate between humans on the basis of their age, health or life expectancy, we can argue with Colin McGinn (1997) who writes on this theme, saying, that it is not really an issue on which there might be two sides. Not only that we could hardly find a justifiable standpoint that could support the current state of abuse, the treatment of animals in “humanity’s worst moral failing” (Orr, 2007: 219).

Since human ethics is characterized by notions of authority, fear, judgment, balancing pain and pleasure, rights and laws and their consequences, and since there is hardly possible to involve concrete living beings, I will first write on animal ethic keeping in mind evident problems. Then I will look for roots of ethical thinking (2), and especially for patriarchy as the most powerful pattern of our present ethical debate (3). With the relation between ethic and evolution (4) I will indicate some aspects of ‘unconscious’ source of ethical thinking which are decisive in ethical choice (5). My presumption is that ethics, also animal ethic, rises out of the present-time consciousness which connects unconscious mechanisms (emotions, feelings) and their invisible powers with conscious awareness of our responsibility for what we know.

### Animal ethic

Any quick review of theories of animal ethics likely points out the differences among those authors who advocate a need for a distinctive ethic are questions of details. At the moment I am leaving behind theories which do not include critical consciousness in questions which regard status of nonhuman animals and of life itself in our self-referential reflections. Though individual authors argue that questions of detail are important, it is not easy to explain why these distinctions do not exert influence upon practical treatment of animals. The question is where the debate is going and what might be the markers of it. Within this undertaking is one other question ‘of detail’ why we use the term *animal* ethics at all. It seems, not only in this situation, that adjective and noun try to disassociate themselves. If we try to explain what we might say with this pair of words, the most extensive definition describes someone who rejects a significant part of traditional ethical codes which regulate human behavior. In fact, the noun in this pair is an adjective, and the

adjective a noun. The definition of animal ethics follows the path where we might realize direction markers on its horizon. It is in some sense the threshold where the knowledge as mere receptivity and passivity (usual learning) changes to an active participation in the process of life.

The original stage of animal ethic, before the journey begins, might be a stage of receptivity and of imagination, and also of certain innocence. In his research in Celtic history, Brendan Kathbad Myers criticizes the meaning of innocence of our knowledge about the nature of things which we will know. The reason is the same truck between innocence and ignorance so that the innocence about our original state is "indistinguishable from ignorance" (Myers, 2006: 220). The original state is, therefore, unknown and uncertain. It is subjected to manipulation, fear, exploitation and destruction on the instant as it is exposed to suffering. Myers draws attention to the state of nature of innocence as it were some reason for excuse. But it is not. Such an initial state has not yet formed any question about the world, and has not yet stood up to seek real knowledge.

This critical observation of animal ethic which we try to open, might be an admonishment that also human ethics are weak in the sense that do not consider the point of departure as well as the relation between adjective and noun. This point is, as for Myers' view, not innocent. It is, moreover, the reason why we are asking ourselves about the inner structure of ethics as such. While I am quoting an author who is dealing with some mysterious interrogations someone might think that it could be the reason of doubt on the seriousness of that proceeding. But there is one very interesting distinction; it is included in the difference between horizontal and vertical argumentation. While we usually reason from principles to concrete behavior (normative ethics), the horizontal 'reasoning' includes the perception of space (and time) as concrete living together. I will develop this dimension later.

So, in liberating me for this theme, I should not stand back passively receiving knowledge with only 'yes' (agreement with usual normativity) with those who defend animal rights and are interested in animal ethics as well, but also with a certain 'no' in front of too strong theoretical frame of discussion which generally obligates only 'others', not me. The case of Gary Francione and Gary Steiner (2010) is instructive. Both

of them advocate high standards of animal ethics (rights/welfare arguments) but they still dispute who of them is right. Gary Francione defends animal's rights: "For the most part, when I refer to animal rights, I am really referring to *one* right: the right not to be treated as the property of humans. The recognition of this one right require that we (1) stop our institutional exploitation of nonhuman animals; (2) cease binging domesticated nonhumans into existence; and (3) stop killing non-domesticated animals and destroying their habitat. I am not arguing that animals ought to have the same rights as humans, many of which would not even been applicable to non-humans" (Francione, 2010: 1). On the other hand, Robert Garner is defending animal's moral status and animal's welfare. "It is the recognition of the moral significance of sentience that forms the basis of the concept of animal welfare. Indeed, animal welfare has reached such a degree of acceptability that it can be regarded as the moral orthodoxy. Its central feature is an insistence that humans are morally superior to animals, but that, because animals have some moral worth, we are not entitled to inflict suffering on them if the human benefit thereby resulting is not necessary. The principle of unnecessary suffering, therefore, can be invoked if the level of suffering on an animal outweighs the benefit to be gained by humans" (Garner, 2010: 106–7). The first one, as Robert Nozick (1974: 35–42) pointed out, is resulting from 'kantianism for people', whereas the second one follows 'the utilitarianism for animals'.

The main difference between human and animal ethics is that there is almost impossible to reach the balance between interests of both sides. It is somehow permitted to sacrifice the interest of animals for the welfare of humans provided that the benefit for humans is significant enough that it compensates the suffering of animals, but it is prohibited to treat humans in the same way, even though the benefit of one's sacrifice might have been evident.

Theoretical advancement in this sphere is undeniable. There are few philosophers today who would deny that animal are sentient and that all humans owe at least something to them directly or indirectly. Tom Regan (1985), one of the most audible advocates of animal rights, was referring to the fact that animals are subjects of a *life*. In his view humans when they are doing with animals, they very often do not notice

that animals are alive to say nothing of animals' emotional or cognitive capacities. Though they profess to believe in animal rights, they see no violation of rights in traditional agriculture, in hunting of adult animals or in the use of animals in advanced medical research. Where this short-sightedness comes from? Regan argued that it was the systemic mistake built in our traditional (vertical) way of thinking. He was, therefore, committed for the following goals: "The total abolition of the use of animals in science; the total dissolution of commercial animal agriculture; the total elimination of commercial and sport hunting and trapping" (Regan, 1985: 13). We can observe a continuum growing of recognition that animal ethics might challenge our understanding of the world as well as our responsibility for what we know. The fundamental problem is our way of self-recognition and manner of thinking which is that humans see animals as their resource, something which belongs to them to be eaten, manipulated, exploited, and so on. As soon as people have agreed that animals are owned by them, it was already provided what happened later. This manner of thinking can not provide any useful or effective ethical thinking. Even if we go a step further challenging the common knowledge that animals are morally inferior to humans, and recognize a full set of rights to animals, we have no solid ground to stand for them; animals are simply lacking of moral agency. Tom Regan believed that there is not only the question of how animals were *treated* (utilitarian or Kantian access to this question), but also the question what humans *know* about animals and living environment. In his view, all humans should reach a consensus that they have to move from mainly negative ethical connotations – which are referring to them as agents – to the positive ones which postulate a circular knowledge starting from human's dignity to the theory which adequately guards animals against many-fold abuses.

In this sense, Robert Garner writes about *flawed ethic* (Garner, 2010: 112). In his view every description of normativity, whatever it might be, comes too late and cannot reach substantial change neither of knowing nor of behaving because the point of departure is not known. The normative ethics are lagging behind not only formally but also for certain innocent ignorance mentioned before.

Here we have to point out that difficult journey of the biology of ethics through the period of anthropocene in which the method of violence prevailed. The term was first used by Eugene F. Stoermer, but its popularity owes to Paul J. Crutzen (Crutzen et al., 2011; Seielstadt, 2012). With this denomination of the historical period of humanity we would also expose the problem of the 'vertical' pattern of argumentation that goes from above downwards. The eventual reason thereof is the skipping over one form of social regulation of common life (Girard, 1987). This informal terminology emerges as astonishment over human activities which have significant impact both to the social systems' development as to the Earth's ecosystems. Humans (*homo sapiens*) are proud on their complex social functional system while they do not know enough accurately about the fact that this complexity is driven mostly by passively received knowledge (how to behave) and not by a positive one which would have driven a liberating process also in the sphere for ethical thinking (Schwägerl, 2012).

In order to build a culture that grows with biological clock instead of depleting it, humans need to understand better the problem of violence which remains an open question in many directions. Though we do not know about whether the level of violence among simple societies was greater (or lesser) than the violence the civilization experiences today, we find it in the present time as a cultural anomaly especially because of certain circumstances where it emerges. René Girard even argues that one non-typical emerging of violence in the so called scapegoat mechanism was a cornerstone of the civilization on the threshold from tribal societies to (pre)modern civilization (Girard, 1986). In this 'jump' should have been born religion which uses both dimension in rebinding the detached, the horizontal one (moral) and the vertical one (religious), but more the last one. Though since then the violence is not only controlled (might be) but also channeled – as for example in the case of wider socialization through religion –, many elements of violence remain destructive.

In her writing on pagan ethical and religious perspective, Emma Restall Orr (2007) reports that modern research on paganism might be of help in looking for how to couple these two dimensions of ethics, ethics as behavior (morality) and ethics as thinking, reflecting, living (mindful

awareness of what is going on in the process of life, religious thinking, spiritual knowledge and so on). She believes that the Golden Rule offers one answer. Whatever its formulation is worldwide it shows that at the beginning of each new conceptualization there is a certain belief that it is possible not only to show in a concrete action but also to express through language, and that this potentiality of expression at first sight is much stronger than any written code or law which follows. So Orr, we have to go back in the history to the moment when such an experience has been formulated, and in what occasion. One example of this rule is as follows: “Do what you like so long as you harm no one” (Orr, 2007: 99). This pattern might remember us on the faith of familiar community far before there have existed extensive rules how to behave outside of this narrowly framed environment.

The idea of animal ethics requires more than only the ability to reflect upon the welfare of others. In question is the whole life through time and space, its transformation. In many aspects, this transformation starts if one might enter in this circle and participate in the transformation of relational (community's) life. Encouraging is the phrase: “Do what you like!” The other part, “so long as you harm no one” is much more complicated. First of all, that “it” is referring to one's doing, on his activity, not to theirs (his/her) living. And what means “hurt/harm”? It is a far broader word than the pain or suffering considered by the utilitarian philosophers, like J. Bentham and J. S. Mill. Furthermore, who is covered by “none” (Orr, 100–1) if there is difference between none and no one? Does this also mean only human beings? The opposite, using the word ‘love’ (in Augustine's “Dilege et quod vis fac”) instead of ‘like’ is as meaningless as the edict never to cause harm, if it is only transitory painfully rush of passions. But, on the other hand, this word invokes deep experience that the humanness was emerging from unconditional seeking of the full story which is love of the other to me (Irigaray, 1996). This is the case of this paper.

### What is ethics?

It is not necessary to reject social conventions in order to attain the source of ethical thinking somewhere in the past. But if we think that



ethics is fundamentally motivated by social realm, and as such a consequence of social reality and not its cause, this step is probably necessary. Apart from usual interpretation of ethics as “first philosophy” (E. Lévinas) which is projected on others (neighbors), celebrated with them when shared (Orr, 2007: 64; Irigaray, 2004), my intention is to pose another perspective of this endeavor. It is somehow related with and build upon the well known phrase of golden rule, expressed for example also in already mentioned Augustine’s *“Dilege et quod vis fac”* (Hom. in Joh., 7, 8).

Ethics is a living thinking which grows immediately out of the consciousness that there is something stronger than I am, like environment (geographical conditions), sudden changes, anger and sadness, sexual characteristic, hunger and so on, but that I am not constrained to submit myself to them. On the contrary, I am invited somehow to enter in relation and to form ‘community’. These ‘forces’ are a fundamental reason that I can breath my own diversity. This horizontal duality which humans experience in the relation between man and woman, already explains that ethics as set of rules in an abstract sphere, like normative ethics, is already a tool which is whether used as a mean for controlling these forces or sold to those people who seek identity and autonomy. In the original ethical thinking, long before the humanity was divorced from nature, there has been no fear of the powers of nature.

Ethical thinking is also a memorization of how certain heritage was lost. The emergence of environmental ethic in the sixties of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which has its origins in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the industrialization began, is characterized by that perception of loss of environmental concern. Characteristic for such an ethical thinking is also an immediate knowledge that the original state of nature (or “nature of state” in Nozick’s thinking, Nozick, 1974) was not submission to but love for nature. At the core of the ancient (traditional) ethical thinking is much more than romantic curiosity of what the nature is; it is an encouraging search for one’s own talents and skills which are then brought back to the community as a whole (Gwynne, 2010). In that sense ethical and religious thinking are very similar: both are seeking for self-awareness in front of powerful nature without being drown in self-delusion. Worse than wrong choice is, then, when someone leaves this confron-

tation by “deliberate evasion of personal responsibility”, by “denial of involvement, through the simplicity of what is the most human brutal act: thoughtlessness” (Orr, 2007: 139).

How to define, then, ethical thinking? It is more than usual to think that ethics might be a fruit of culture or religion, like its derivative. It is at least more comfortable to think there is (could be) someone who is going ahead like a teacher, sure in his/her knowledge/decisions, every time with necessary information about right and wrong. This kind of ethics is about social acceptability and holds certain cohesive power. On the other side, throughout the modern society, the rational and high intellectual ethics prevail, though it fails to clarify simplest moral codes, like ‘Golden Rule’. This ethical thinking often rejects social conventions, but it has no motivation to forge a new utopia or to break new ground. The defenders of secular ethics are rather focused on inner structure of ethical repertoire than on its realization in the concrete community.

I am not asking for ethics as guidance or as notion of authority, though the inspiration of an immediate ethical consideration is doubtless also practical. I am focused on the autonomy of individual person with his/her strait connection to his/her family, ethnic group, heritage, landscape, and so on (1) who takes responsibility and feels being empowered, (2) engages him/herself with the world and values community, (3) trusts that life is a fundamental good which holds an inherent meaning in itself, (4) appreciates polarities of life, (5) tends to hospitality and (6) is honest to the others and the world (cf. Orr, 2007: 104). But, to repeat, there is no submission to it as an authoritative assessment. From the perspective of interconnectedness with natural environment, there is no separation as from the world as a whole as from its details. The understanding of natural environment holds both knowledge and behaving.

Though everything is in constant move and struggle, the basic ethical notion is not pessimistic. By the side of the fact that cohesive force of ethical thinking belongs to inherent forces of violence, it leads to a clearer understanding of life through generosity and compassion. Generosity and especially hospitality establish the frame of relations and ease pressure when it comes to the potential danger.

Among many characteristic traits of ethical thinking, such as honor, expressivity through body language (especially through the face), cour-

age (Antigone), generosity, hospitality, judgment, awareness of limited life, and of death, one of the most important is freedom. With regard to our theme of animal ethic, freedom is in many ways its defining element. I would underline one of its characteristics represented in Orr's traits of natural ethics (Orr, 2007: 135–7). E. R. Orr sees in a freedom both a story as well as seeking of the story of personal relationship. Freedom as a story is an expression of fundamental ethical thinking as not being submitted to the forces of (human) nature. Freedom is therefore a seeking of the whole story of the other person besides me. In that sense, freedom is the opposite of a universal law, but not in opposition with it. While the universal law is often irrelevant in one's ethical knowledge and its personal story, it is universal when freedom becomes a task. The task is on the side of the observers. His/her task of freedom is that they seek the story and accept bad behavior as a natural part of it. Creative is the freedom which is capable to see the nature as a whole so that also the observer takes part of that wholeness. The practical question how to work with destructive forces which produce violence is therefore not to avoid them but to look for the whole story and to express the generosity of listening to the persons (people) who stumble through the life, and then to act (Arendt, 1998).

This expression of reverence for nature's forces without being submitted to them deserves a special attention in an ethics which attempts human transformation. This insight is important to the humanities if they will take part in the design of animal ethic capable to enact vivid awareness of a wider community of living. "The conscious realization of the sense of relatedness and the development of the more impartial sense of warmth are encouraged in the mindfulness/awareness tradition by various contemplative practices such as the generation of loving-kindness. It is said that the full realization of groundlessness (*sunyata*) cannot occur if there is no warmth" (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991: 249–250). The point is not that there is no need of normative ethics, but that such rules might be sterile if they were not informed by the wisdom of immediate responsiveness.

If we turn back to the 'golden rule', the ethical concern about the consequences of ethical knowledge as well as actions, the responsive freedom, is possible, with Maturana's words, "only in the domain of love as

we live as languaging being” (Maturana and Verden-Zöller, 2008: 80). Humberto Maturana and Gerda Verden-Zöller include language as a manner of ethical thinking among humans in their living together. They understand language as the primary ability of ethical thinking, of ethical concern, to see the other as legitimate other also beyond human community. “Ethics is a particular kind of conversation, a reflexive conversation of seeing and care for the consequences of one’s actions on others” (Maturana and Verden-Zöller, 2008: 81).

### Ethics and the birth of patriarchy

The verbalized (normative) ethics was, in fact, the first attempt to assess not-codified prohibitions, punishments and compensations which emerged at the border between humans and their environment. My intention here is to question if this phenomenon between humans and their environment was the cause or the consequence of emerging of patriarchal system, that is, of conflicts and tensions within the family. Bronislaw Malinowski (2001), the father of social anthropology, supposes in his observation that patriarchy is not necessarily bound with ‘father’ and not even with Freud’s assertions that Oedipus complex is universal. The role of father (or some other ‘individual’ in the family) rested in a certain comfort and protection against the possible intruders from outside. Though Malinowski shows, against Freud, that patriarchy has nothing to do with psychoanalytic drama of unconscious level, his observation demonstrates that primitive society with its combating mimetic rivalry ‘discovered’ the fundamental characteristic of interconnectedness between humans either within human society or beyond the family’s frame. The father does not represent the ideal within the family where the mother took over the cultural line (Girard, 1979: 186–7).

This splitting of the family from within represents an evolutionary level of social and cultural development in which humans (father, mother, son) do not only belong to the same lineage but also live as individuals. Though we do not leave behind that socio-anthropological view, this development caused the more or less arbitrary differentiation of functions which have less and less junctures.

Maturana's interpretation of patriarchy represents a very interesting joining to this problematic (Maturana and Verden-Zöller, 2008: 87–94). He argues, together with Gerda Verden-Zöller, that patriarchy represents a kind of regression in the evolutionary process of conservation of manner of living together. The experience with children after the Second World War convinced G. Verden-Zöller that this period of modern history repeated one of the most significant insights about what manner of living together would be able to be conserved and what not. In her affirmation of the importance of child-mother relation is also evident that where this emotional dynamic lacks the manner of living is not able to be conserved. The emotioning between mother and child which is operational fundament for the whole life of each individual person was radically broached through the mere normative pattern of life from outside. With other words, the patriarchy represents a pattern of living which is not based on loving relation between mother and child, and therefore a lineage which has no power of its own to be conserved as a manner of living. This is not only the assertion about human's capacity to accommodate or to change life in different environments but also the statement as far to life as organizational principle which might be translated with 'love'. Though only humans experience love in conversations which is the core of so called narrative ethics, love is the only principle in which processes of acting and knowing coincide completely.

Why it is important in our case? The rather accentuated normativity which is narrowly linked to patriarchy is the point of departure to our linkage between (animal) ethic and patriarchy. In patriarchy, too much focus has been spent on increasing confidence in our plans and will and in our grasping mind, and not enough, if at all, in our relationship with nonhuman nature. Without significant commitment to the study of how stricter (ethical) commandments emerged we will still have problems with connections between ethics as abstraction of certain rules and (un)ethical behavior. Animal ethic is an example, perhaps not the most convenient, that human beings exist in conversations so that the language (and cognition) represents a relational space beyond material dynamics that make them possible.

In order that such a change would be also a cultural one the basic (biological) relation should be conserved. As we have already seen, the

change to patriarchy cancelled the relational dimension with and within the environment. Patriarchal culture consists in a manner of living centered in appropriation, domination and submission, mistrust and control, sexual and racial discrimination, fear and war. In order to understand that change which occurred in the basic human pattern of mother-child-relation, the step from patriarchy to political manner of living should be considered. Meanwhile the coexistence is more and more tensed, the political manner of living is one of the typical traits of patriarchy. It is enough to expose two characteristics of these types of relations: instrumentality and exposure in the open space (Plato's *chōra*). There are many other but these two suffice in our case. The political manner of living is namely not able to provide constitutive elements for further development of humanity which is based on mutual trust and love. With other words, the patriarchy as a manner of living uses aggression and mistrust as 'cultural tools' in order to conserve advantages gained by them. This style of living suggests diverse anomalies already indicated above. As Maturana suggests, this manner of living does not happen in a closed network of conversations (Maturana and Verden-Zöller, 2008: 88). It must use parasitic methods.

This gap in the network of relations removes language from emotions more and more. The words used in conversations are more and more distant from identities of those who speak. In these circumstances the language is becoming a pattern of manipulation and control.

This radical change of pattern of living together announced the geological period called anthropocene. Its consequences are enormous and may be perceived in geological terms. Many cultural and religious traditions describe this 'event' directly or indirectly with manner of living which is characterized with justifying of such a living as well as with search of biological conditions which might justify human's demanding manner of living (Maturana and Verden-Zöller, 1993). Though this cultural change proved as very successful, compared with the matristic manner of living, this scenario had also different aspects of non-intended dynamic. One of these aspects is also the 'normativity' in ethics which is probably comparable with 'wooden iron'.

Ethical codification is at the same time the consequence of that change of manner of living as well as one of the methods which might

assure the conservation of this change of living. In one supposed scenario, H. Maturana tries to describe how this could happen. The original coexistence between animals (wolves) and humans where they fed together on the same herd humans (men) begun to interfere with the free access of the wolves to the animals of the herd that were their natural food. As men excluded wolves from the herd, they violated the natural and legitimate coexistence of life. The main question was how the men told it to the members of their family when they came back home. They supposedly transmitted this information in the form of norm (prohibition of any contact with wolves which are no more members of extended family). Three main characteristics of the standardized cohabitation emerged: appropriation of property, planning of the future (of the family), and the fear. The fear is probably generated already within the family, because men did not tell all the truth about why they interfered with wolves' free access to the animals. The fear is certainly also generated outside the family in the wider environment. But the fact that mother and children had to live and grove with that not explained norm why they should avoid 'excluded animals' generated certain mentality and behavior which began to restrict the mobility of both humans and wolves. This mentality supposedly generated typical aggressive behavior which characterizes the new pattern of living, the patriarchy.

Though we imagine that animal ethic might clarify relations between human and animal's world, we eventually have to consider that such a legitimization does not touch our emotional sphere where enmity, mistrust, aggression, appropriation, slavery (etc.) prevail. As this manner of living became established, the domesticated animals grew under the protection of humans, but they were not protected against human's new mentality. Almost all manners of animals' abuse originates from this drift of change of manner living. The whole patriarchal network arose with all features. It makes no difference between sexes when the manner of living is questioned. The expression "patriarchal" is not to be associated with men only. In these circumstances we can only confirm that human morality is often overtly and primarily based on the simple need to avoid potentially violent conflict, and not a mirror of matristic communities which were almost completely destroyed.

## Ethics and evolution

It is quite remarkable that today evolutionary proposals for the study of biological origins of ethical thinking and morality are as manifold as profoundly inspirational (Clayton and Schloss, 2004; Murphy and Schloss, 2008). Though early studies saw evolutionary theory as a shifting tool for any engagement in this regard, so that evolutionary ethics resembled to squaring the circle – partly because of the opposition between evolutionary theory and religious (Christian) interpretations of the phenomenon of life – later comments were becoming more and more favorable to philosophical framing of this relation. The partial reason thereof lies in the emergence of cybernetics (N. Wiener, H. von Foerster, W. McCulloch and others) and later with manifold linkages between sciences through systems' theories.

Meanwhile the metaethical sphere was partly unclothed because of its religious traits and claims of absoluteness of moral norms, another dimension of ethical thinking emerged: ethics as a memorized life. With other words: the evolution appeared as a condition, but not as essential for the living organization whereas it is essential for the historical transformation of cognitive domains of the living systems in their environments (Maturana and Varela, 1980: 11–14). Changes within living systems occur continually; they are not limited to the moment of transmission of life which is the only moment the evolutionary theory has in its disposal in interfering or in interpreting changes; on the contrary, changes are cognitive interactions. This linkage between life's process and cognition – life as organizational principle – is typical for Maturana's and Varela's theoretical work in the biology of cognition. Though the evolution allowed statements as if in the life process was no need for any inherent ethical norm, it also showed that such statements did not consider the fact that the biology rendered possible multilayered joining. The simplest processes of life behave as if there were rules similar to 'awareness' that something important is happening.

Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate it we might consider that an interpretation of such awareness is hardly viable. It is also not the point. We would only set the mirror to the ethical thinking, while we state that ineffectiveness of a particular ethic, like animal ethic, reflects the



fact that ethical behaviors, in our perceptions, are not linked to ethical knowledge. Ethics (and morality) do not speak only about behavior but also about knowledge and awareness. This supposition which connects interactive unity of rationality and embodiment enables a wider view on what happens in life. Though human ethical behavior and thinking has a degree of complexity which is unique especially in its codification, the narratives humans have construed around their ethical awareness speak about their unique dignity only if they express through it the whole heritage of life as deeply cooperative (social) interactions.

The issue of ethical realism as relationship between cognition and morality which 'work' is as difficult as instructive about the metaphysical domain of morality. There is no need to leave behind notions on moral/ethical reality as something normative when we might follow the way where ethics means promotion of life *from within*. The metaphysical construction we call ethics maybe has begun as a program of bio-regulation. "The embryo of ethical behaviors /.../ includes all the nonconscious, automated mechanisms that provide metabolic regulation; drives and motivations, emotions of diverse kinds; and feelings. Most importantly, the situations that evoke these emotions and feelings call for solutions that include cooperation. It is not difficult to imagine the emergence of justice and honor out of the practices of cooperation" (Damasio, 2003: 162).

The tension between normative ethics and its application constitute an insoluble situation as long as it turns out clearly that this situation is a consequence that normativity was written for 'others'. The emergence of nonadaptive behavior which was mentioned above is an "imposition upon recalcitrant human biology, not as an emergent fulfillment of it" (Murphy and Schloss, 2008: 551).

Evolutionary history tells both stories: as this of continuous interactions between individual and the environment which answers the question why individual life is not only the manifestation of its genes, as this of the organization of living which defines the system capable of maintaining structural junctions. Though the question whether evolutionary theory has anything to say about ethics traditionally points out rather oppositional statements without any reference to state of nature, the other side underlines the necessity of a new language which might

help us to connect both organizational principle and structure(s). “[E]lucidating biological mechanisms underlying ethical behaviors does not mean that those mechanisms or their dysfunction are the guaranteed cause of a certain behavior. They may be determinative, but not necessarily determinative. The system is so complex and multilayered that it operates with some degree of freedom” (Damasio, 2003: 164). Antonio Damasio is one of the visible representatives of neurobiology who believes that scientific theories have to go beyond dualism which separates what originally belongs together and to develop methods which could see ethical thinking even within evolutionary theory as the most wonderful and the most useful side effect of all other activities which genes enable in each individual living structure.

The hypothesis that evolution and ethics in some sense mirror each other takes nothing away from moral philosophy where ethics as such came from. On the contrary, the grounding role of feelings and emotions as life-monitoring functions play a critical part in the current development of cultural and technological tools which should help us to attain appropriate access to the circular relation between perception and cognition. “We certainly cannot dispense with any part of the gene-given innate apparatus of behavior. Yet it is apparent that, as human societies became more complex and certainly for the ten thousand or more years since agriculture was developed, human survival and well-being depended *on an additional kind of nonautomated governance* in a social and cultural space” (Damasio, 2003: 167).

This dimension of ethics expresses, in poetic manner, that it as *living attendance* of what is happening on the level of embodiment connects exceedingly complex environments with deliberation and formal instruments of culture. Compassion is in this regard the consequence of ethical thinking, but the body (embodiment) has been doing behind something so that the compassion on another level provoked emotions and feelings characteristic for compassion as a consequence. The decisive difference between such comprehension of ethical thinking, which includes embodied structure, and mere moral philosophy is that in the case which includes complexity we are speaking of ways and there of goals. The advantage of a wider perspective is that these two dimensions commonly expressed as “goals and means” are not flawed. Meanwhile

the automated devices are working on ways, the non-automated devices work on goals. We must touch this question whether the negotiating position is so demanding: feelings essentially maintain those goals the cultural reflection considers worthy of perfecting. Though feelings and emotions negotiate with means (ways) they have to meet non-automated devices and somehow help that goals do not clash with basic regulations of life.

### Defining ethical choice

Animal ethic is human ethic as far as we are choosing the conception of human as *ethical animal* (Blackburn, 2001). Though we define/articulate with ethics what is acceptable in terms of behavior, the ethical choice is profoundly personal standpoint. We are choosing with it what we are, what we think and what we know. As for knowledge, ethics certainly represents it about the line between constructive and destructive; but ethic as knowledge is also an expression of our needs in terms of what we know about others in their conduct of their lives. With other words, ethical choice transforms aggregates (contact, feeling, discernment, intention, attention) in knowledge, realizing that these mental factors do not function as tools of reductionism or of abstract analysis of what we can have/reach (Varela, Thomson, and Rosch, 1991: 119–122). These elements are both causes and effects of awareness which result from this process of coming together.

The mention of patriarchy in this regard is a statement towards development of ethical thinking. The emergence of this manner of living is not an evolutionary but a separate cultural (artificial) one. Here, ethics is conceived as a surrogate, which might prevent something like violence, and not enable the change or the choice. So we are looking therefore for an ethical thinking associated with matristic manner of living. Maturana uses this term in order to demonstrate the difference between two manners of living, relating, emotioning. The term patriarchal “is not to be associated with men only; similarly the expression *matristic* is not to be associated only with women. In a patriarchal culture both men and women are patriarchal, and in a matristic culture both men and women are matristic. Matristic and patriarchal cultures are different manners of

emotioning; that is, different closed networks of conversations that are realized in each case by both men and women. Therefore, there is no basic contradiction between men and women in a pastoral patriarchal or in a matristic culture, because in both cultures men and women grow homogeneously patriarchal or matristic. A basic contradiction arises between adult men and women when boys and girls are brought up to become members of different cultures at different moments of their upbringing, which is what we think happens in our Western patriarchal culture” (Maturana, and Verden-Zöller, 2008: 92).

This is a statement to a fairly long historical period of humanity in which human *needs* were transformed in patriarchal *demands*. Animal ethic as a distinctive concern for living beings outside human (ethical) community is a result of cultural hybridization in which two patterns have large difficulties in conversations. Meanwhile we are reminiscent of matristic milieu in early childhood we enter then growing up in a patriarchal and political adulthood. Animal ethic is an indicator of this inner opposition humans experience in different spheres in their life: between man and woman, between modern civilization and cultural transitions, between generations, between humans and animals, humans and environment, and so on. Each individual goes through these contradictions which strongly determine personal development of everyone. Whatever ethic there can be, it is only transitory because not founded on relations.

Political manner of life which immediately follows the patriarchy is founded on domination and submission, and on destroying the intimacy. Everything can become instrument of political manipulation, even the ethical thinking (Judt, 2012). Ethics in the rhetoric of politicians is frustrating because it leads to the utilization of human identity and all his/her relation as political and economic instruments. It makes almost impossible for a child to grow in the biology of love. He/she is already as child immersed in a manner of living which interferes with personal development of self-respect.

From a perspective of natural interconnectedness, ethical choice is projected onto others “and where that perspective is fuelled by the mystical *experience* that is a complete lack of separation, this understanding of truth can be an extremely potent premise of morality. /.../ However, where the understanding of nature’s web is still theoretical, holding to

a notion of truth for morality brings a catalogue of problem, individual truths and needs rising like autumn mist" (Orr, 2007: 105). Morality identifies our affiliation to community while ethics is shaping personal identity. But in both cases the circular structure of living patterns the binding link has to be founded in the experience of permanent self. This insight, already mentioned with the Golden Rule, by F. Varela also called "codependent arising" or "carmic causality" (Varela, Thompson and Rosch, 1991: 110.119–120) constitutes a description of psychological causality of how life process as a whole continues through time. This radical turn to the self-experience – which is not identical to the experience of the self – not only dismantles the problem of theoretical ethics which can in only moment interrupt the chain of codependent conditioning, but also motivates the developing of first-person accounts of explanatory gap between subjectivity and objectivity. Its entire issue is based on the assumption "that lived experience is irreducible, that is, that phenomenal data cannot be reduced or derived from the third-person perspective" (Varela and Shear, 1999: 4).

Crucial here is (1) if the whole community/society discusses and defines the frame of reference, and (2) if the ethical behavior follows belonging to the social group more than the quest for identity. When someone, or a group, can not agree with wider moral/ethical standards, but he is also not able to launch the change, his loyalty brings neither anything to the society not to the shared morality. It is perhaps interestingly that Augustine articulated his version of Golden Rule on the occasion of the baptism. The new-baptized chose new life. We can imagine that this new life was already set within boundaries of common sense, but the person decided, in a certain sense, to change his/her life as with respect to his/her own experience as with respect to the others. This ritual did probably mean the ultimate goal, the Aristotle's *telos*, while the intended way was an ultimately good, *entelecheia*.

To conclude this section, we have at least to mention the role of reason in ethical choice. In a real choice, the reason can likely choose only what is morally acceptable, or not. Though I. Kant declared true morality is anchored in reason, it was rather his desire to separate freedom from desire. It is certainly true that Kant's perception of ethical imperative postulates in some sense the existence of animal rights, but he prob-

ably could not agree with the meandering role of rational avoiding of the question itself what animal ethic is and what humans choose with it, or through it. On the other side, moral philosophy has for centuries dedicated efforts in order to prove that there was universal morality as through time as through the globe. Though moral codes have been multiplied and the consideration of anything other than universality was held as illogical, this particular perspective lacks of necessary involvement of first-person consciousness of present-time. This dimension of time which is completely absent in universal morality has its base in biological elementary events called experience. “The first scale is emotions: the awareness of a tonal shift that is constitutive of the living present. The second is affect, a dispositional trend proper to a coherent sequence of embodied actions. Finally mood, the scale of narrative description over more or less long duration” (Varela, 1999: 132). It is the reason why it is said that ethical judgment is chronically *in retard*.

### Conclusion

The discovery of mirror neurons in the nineties of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Giacomo Rizzolatti with his colleagues at the University of Parma) triggered a very vivid scientific research of human and animal face- and body-expressions as well as capacities of imitations and spontaneity in compassionate behavior. This denomination of multilayered connections within the body as well as within the relational environment was an important step in surpassing the dualistic pattern of thinking. This “as-if body loop hypothesis” (Damasio, 2010: 102) supposes that the network which we have talked about exists. We have in a certain sense to reconsider our analysis of ethical thinking under the viewpoint of the circulation between external (rational, metaphysical, normative, neutral) and experiential (emotional, embodied, narrative, non-neutral respectively conscious of the present time) world. If the neural system is capable to simulate someone else’s body state, that is ‘to play the ape’ (literarily in the case of G. Rizzolatti), he/she is then able to simulate its own body and to reinforce the operation and narratives as well. It is a hypothesis that the mirror-neurons may be engaging emotions – or may be emotions. Anyhow, a set of possible explanations of what is going on in this

theatre of life allows us to understand actions of others by placing ourselves in a comparable body state. We can witness an action in another not only passively by not agreeing but also actively in pre-activation of living structures ready for action. I do not know if this scientific adventure in human's complexity will create linkages to ethical thinking with enough rapid activation of all important body states, which are associated with relevant knowledge, as well as cognitive strategies.

To say at the end, I have used the hypothesis of *as-if body loop* as a metaphor, partly to indicate the need not to mingle composite living systems with social phenomena, partly with intention to indicate that central feature of human existence is language which characterizes the inner organization of social realm. The language configures relations which constitute both structures and its manner of living. Both arises codependent: the existence of conversation (language) can not constitute humanness by itself, the bodyhood dynamics is also necessary. Though it is not enough to be born as *homo sapiens* to be able to conserve that which makes human as human, the body also conserves the changes essential for the conservation of *homo sapiens-amans* (Maturana).

From the viewpoint of animal ethic, the choice humans make in front of animals or in front of life-world as such represents the realization of a particular part of social relations. At the same time, they validate that choice itself as well as the world which is co-originated thereof if they are partner of living. According to the present ethical discussion, the fundamental ethical problem is how to *justify* that any relation requires certain surrender of autonomy and individuality. But it ceases to be so because we can realize at any moment that the change could not be conserved if the relation would be only cosmetic. Nevertheless the social creativity as generation of novelty, which animal ethic certainly is, entails interactions/operations outside the society we know today and generates conducts (and knowledge) which might change its defining relations. It is to say that animal ethic would whether change defining relations within society or separate from it those who, as observers of the society, do not have any more the possibility to operate inside the society.

Ethical interactions are certainly not only confirmatory, but, depending from the degree of structural coupling, they are also confirmatory. This statement that ethics should stabilize human conduct and eventually prevent outburst of violence is generally known. This kind of ethics only restricts interactions the individual has within or outside the society. Animal ethic speaks of another kind of conduct: while it requires ethical choice, it is not spontaneous. We know well that it is not equally desirable and that it comes out as antisocial. Though this situation may obstruct every constructive change, any ethical thinking, and especially animal ethic, creates some experiences which can not be fully specified within society. It does not destroy established consentaneity about what is social and what not, but allow to each member of society to be integral part of it as well as its critical observer.

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